

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN McCAIN
RANKING REPUBLICAN, SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
FULL COMMITTEE HEARING
ON SEAPORT SECURITY
JULY 24, 2001

C I want to begin by thanking Chairman Hollings for holding this hearing today. In my capacity as Chairman, I held a similar hearing last fall. In light of recent world events and problems here at home, I know that we can all agree that insuring the security of our nation's seaports is a necessity. The bombing of the USS Cole and ongoing problems with drug and alien smuggling, while highlighting the need for action, also show the complexity of the issue.

- In our efforts to increase our nation's seaport security, we must ensure that we take into account not only the wide range of threats and crimes surrounding our seaports, but also the unique nature of our ports. A "one-size-fits-all" approach will not work. Our ports are complex and diverse in both geography and infrastructure. It is essential that we keep this in mind as we go forward with legislation to improve security.
- I believe that we must proceed with caution in the development of new programs to address problems of lax seaport security. In some cases, the problems we face today in our seaports are not due to a lack of programs to address them, but result more from a lack of attention both in funding and hard assets for the agencies who are currently responsible for seaport security.

C I know today's witnesses are going to share their views on the Interagency Commission's Report on Crime and Security in U.S. Seaports. As we found during last year's hearing, the Commissioners determined that seaport crime encompasses a broad range of crimes. These include:

- the importation of illicit drugs, contraband, and prohibited or restricted merchandise;
- stowaways and alien smuggling;
- trade fraud and commercial smuggling;
- environmental crimes; cargo theft; and
- the unlawful exportation of controlled commodities and munitions, stolen property, and drug proceeds.

C I want to once again, thank all the members of the Commission for their efforts in bringing their concerns to our attention.

C I am interested in hearing from our witnesses, whom I understand share many of the concerns

raised by the Commission, what is needed to address security concerns and hope they will offer recommendations that can be utilized in advancing a legislative resolution. I am also interested in hearing their views on S. 1214, the Port and Maritime Security Act of 2001, which was introduced by Chairman Hollings last Friday.

- Specifically, I hope our witnesses can shed some light on how they believe the provisions of that bill could be implemented, what they believe would be the cost to both the public and private sector, and how the flow of commerce would be effected. As I stated earlier, we must not ignore the need for increased attention to the security of our nation's seaports, but we can ill afford to put requirements on the ports that will degrade their ability to facilitate the movement of commerce.